

**Evaluation of the Research and Professional Activity of the Institutes of the
Czech Academy of Sciences (CAS)
for the period 2010–2014**

Final Report on the Evaluation of the Institute

Name of the Institute: Institute of Psychology of the CAS, v. v. i.

Fields, in which the Institute registered its teams:

Psychology

Observer representing the Academy Council of the CAS: Pavel Janoušek

Observer representing the Institute: Martina Hřebíčková, substitute observer Iva Šolcová

Commission No. 10: Social sciences

Chair: doc. JUDr., PhD., LL.M. Kristian Csach

Date(s) of the visit of the Institute: October 19 - October 23, 2015

Programme of the visit of the Institute: see attached Minutes from the visit

Evaluated research teams:

No. 1 - Department of personality and social psychology; No. 2 - Department of cognitive psychology; No. 3 - Department of research methodology

A. Evaluation of the Institute as a whole

1. Introduction

The purpose of the Institute of Psychology is to carry out scientific research in the field of psychology, to contribute to the utilisation of its research results, and to provide a research infrastructure. The principal activity of the institute is scientific research focused on selected key problems in the field of psychology, particularly in personality and social psychology, cognitive psychology and research methodology. The Institute initially comprised four departments, since January 2013 of three departments – the evaluated teams.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

Interesting and promising topics;

The focus on publishing in journals with an impact factor above the median of the research field;

Promising age structure;

Interdisciplinary cooperation;

Extensive teaching activity (pool of extraordinary students);

The experimental psychology lab.

3. Weaknesses and Threats

limited ability to concentrate a larger number of researchers around key scientific problems

Lack of foreign employees;

Extensive teaching activity might be time consuming and demanding;

Uncertainty of funding, lack of “private” funding;

More formal procedural rigorousness might be needed (rules on the usage and financing of experimental lab, etc.)

4. Recommendations

Concerning the Institute of Psychology as a whole, it might be useful for the Institute to form a scientific advisory committee, ideally composed of distinguished international researchers. This committee could help with suggestions for research directions, and assist with the evaluation of personnel and ongoing research projects. A further suggestion for the Institute is that it could work to more closely coordinate its PhD training activities with the relevant universities.

The Institute could improve the project steering and management via supporting intra-institutional cooperation between the teams in order to reach for the award of a European Union research grant.

According to the given data, no outside funding from private sources could be obtained in the evaluated period. A clearer policy and guidelines towards selling of the research results to a general public (and business) might be appreciated.

5. Detailed evaluations

Declaration on the quality of the results and share in their acquisition

The Institute of Psychology publishes the journal *Československá psychologie*, the only psychological journal in the Czech Republic with an impact factor.

Since the last evaluation there has been a significant increase in the number of foreign publications. The particular research outcomes are discussed in more detail in the following evaluation of the particular teams.

Declaration on the involvement of students in research

The institute members seem to be involved in extensive teaching activities.

Students from several universities were involved in research in the Institute. During the period 2010-2014, researchers from the IPS supervised 40 bachelor, 140 master, and 14 doctoral students.

IPS annually organizes Winter School of Cognitive Psychology (course of lectures and seminars concerning research in the field of cognitive psychology) and Summer School of Linguistics (course of lectures and seminars concerning the research of language and psycholinguistic problems).

The Institute seems to involve students in the research very actively (i.e. via The experimental psychology lab in the Prague branch of the institute).

However, it might be needed to distinguish between the involvement of students in research and their involvement as participants to experiments.

Declaration on societal relevance

The societal relevance of IPS is undisputed. In general, IPS has an extensive collaboration with universities. In the evaluated period, the Institute has carried out four joint research projects with universities (Masaryk University, Brno; Charles University, Prague; University of South Bohemia, České Budějovice; Academy of Performing Arts, Prague).

According to the information provided the IPS is involved in ambitious research popularization activities.

The Library of the Institute of Psychology provides services to researchers of the Institute and to the public.

Declaration on the position in the international and national context

According to the given data, the Institute intensified international cooperation, both at the personal (international contacts of individual employees) and inter-institutional

level (via agreements with institutes such as University of Helsinki, Finland; Institute for Biomedical Problems, Russia; Institute of Psychology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Poland; University of Kentucky, USA; University of Newcastle, Australia). In particular, team members are represented in steering and professional committees of relevant international scientific associations (European Federation of Psychologists' Associations, International Union of Psychological Science, European Science Foundation, European Association of Personality Psychology) and work as reviewers for professional journals, participate in foreign scientific projects which indicates their high reputation on international level. This is also demonstrated by the organization of major international events (15th European Conference on Personality, 2010; 12th Biennial Conference of European Personal Construct Association, 2014).

However, there still is a limitation regarding the hiring of truly foreign researchers.

Declaration on the vitality and sustainability

The Institute is well established and recognised. The Commission welcomes the trend to define processes and criteria for internal evaluation of research outcomes (i.e. the rules on Expected Scientific Performance). It might be useful to establish an international advisory board in order to supplement the ongoing internal evaluation of the employees via the CAS system or the internal one (biannual Expected Scientific Performance evaluation) with a more general evaluation of the research aims of the teams.

The Institute operates an experimental psychology lab which is a separate service unit providing space and equipment for executing experimental and observational studies in the Prague branch of the institute.

Declaration on the strategy and plans for the future

The goals as defined by the respective teams and the organisational and supportive aims of the Institute itself could lead to an improvement of inter-institutional cooperation and project management of research.

The goals and strategy is well defined and balanced between the teams.

B. Evaluation of the individual teams

Evaluation of the Team No. 1: Department of personality and social psychology

1. Introduction

This department of the IP is specialized in basic research in personality and social psychology. It is the biggest team in the IP; there are 17 research employees (8 scientists, 7 postdocs, 2 PhD students). The age structure is a little skewed to the young end; it ranges from 25 to over 70 years. The gender structure is well-balanced. There are three main research domains: (1) Conditions and risk factors of successful development in different life periods, & resilience in difficult situations, (2) Intergroup relations and (3) Personality structure. The team leader presented the main research results accomplished in each domain and at the same time informed about the main journals in which the results were published. The members of the department published research in top journals in their respective fields (e.g. European Journal of Personality, European Journal of Social Psychology, Journal for the Psychology of Religion, Journal of Personality, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Journal of Research in Personality, PLoS ONE).

There was a great progress in scientific output from the last evaluation in this department. In the last period, there were published 35 articles in journal with IF published in international journals (in English). In the evaluated period there were 50 articles. The number of articles published in top ranking journal doubled (from 11 to 22). The department is also very successful in obtaining support for its research from grants awarded by NSF: They obtained all in all 13 grants in the evaluated period. Besides, the team is involved in additional two projects running on a national level and in four international projects. Members of the department are also in editorial boards and committees of EFPA.

The evaluation of the outputs in Phase I found that the quality of the publications of this Department was quite high, with 5 publications receiving a rating of “1” (world-leading), 6 publications receiving a rating of “2” (internationally excellent), 4 publications receiving a rating of “3” (recognized internationally), 4 publications receiving a rating of “4” (recognized nationally), and only 3 publications – a very small proportion – receiving ratings of “5” (below standard, or not meeting the definition of published research).

The team plans to continue its research and also to go to some new horizons. It established new connections with University of California, Riverside, USA, and University of Kentucky, USA.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

See also the general report of the Institute

Progress in scientific output

High percentage of research output qualified as belonging to top-level quality group

Interesting topics

3. Weaknesses and Threats

See also the general report of the Institute

Administration

Uncertainty of funding

4. Recommendations

The Department could, with a small increase in resources, work seriously towards the award of a European Union research grant. This would be a demanding endeavor but the quality of the work in the Institute makes such an achievement feasible in the long term. In the shorter term, the Institute accomplishes much with a relatively thin base of resources compared to its international competitors, and would be highly likely to use any increase in support in an efficient and effective manner.

5. Detailed evaluations

Student Involvement in Research

Students from several universities were involved in research in the Institute. During the period 2010-2014, researchers from the Department of Personality and Social Psychology supervised 27 bachelor, 57 master, and 5 doctoral students. Five theses were defended during this period.

Societal Relevance

The work of the Department is highly relevant to major societal concerns including successful child development, bullying in school and its consequences, and intergroup contact and the factors that affect how members of ethnic and other groups perceive and interact with each other. The Committee can point out, as being of particular relevance, the work on school bullying, which is an important risk factor in child development that is becoming of increasing interest in the study of educational psychology around the world. Another topic of special relevance is the study of national stereotypes. The main finding of the research of the Department on this topic, which is that such stereotypes across Europe are largely inaccurate, has major implications for prospects for European unity and obstacles that remain to be overcome in achieving this unity. Continued work on both of these topics is highly worthy of further and even increased support.

Members of the Department active lecturers in the major universities of the Czech Republic.

The Department has been very active in popularization of its work. They have presented findings in the media, given public lectures, and written popular articles. Their report includes a long list of specific examples.

International and National Position

Without question, the Department of Personality and Social Psychology is pre-eminent in research in this area within the Czech Republic. On the international stage, the Institute is also impressive. Its basic research, particularly on personality structure, addresses a fundamental issue of widespread interest to psychologists in many countries and the findings from this Institute have had an important impact on the understanding of this topic by the international discipline. Some of its researchers are well-known internationally, publishing regularly, in English, in internationally visible journals, reviewing for international journals, attending and presenting at international conferences, and serving as officers of important international organizations, such as the European Association of Personality Psychology. A major international research conference, the European Association of Personality Psychology, was held in Brno, organized by members of the Department. Its research output could be favorably compared to that of a mid-level Department of Psychology in an American research university. The accomplishments of this Department are remarkable considering its size and position.

Evaluation of the Team No. 2: Department of cognitive psychology

1. Introduction

This department of the IP is specialized in basic research in cognitive psychology. It is a relatively small team; there are 7 research employees (5 scientists, 2 PhD students). All the scientists are in the age range 35 to 45 years.

There are three main research domains: (1) Visual perception and attention, (2) Psycholinguistics and (3) Study of the experimental instruments in historical perspective. The team leader presented some published research from each field. The main results were published in top journals in their respective fields (e.g. Visual Research, Journal of Vision, Visual Cognition, Perception and Attention, Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research, Journal of Psycholinguistic Research, American Journal of Psychology) and in some monographs, too.

There was a great progress in scientific output from the last evaluation in this department. In the last period, there were published 12 articles in journal with IF, 2 of them were published in international journals (in English). In the evaluated period there were 25 articles, 18 of them were published in the international journals. The department is also very successful in obtaining support for its research from grants awarded by NSF: They obtained all in all 8 grants in the evaluated period. Besides, the team also established a laboratory (LABELS), which is a joint project with the Faculty of Arts of Charles University (FF UK). Two of members of the team of cognitive psychology have achieved a recognition by obtaining the prestigious Otto Wichterle Award.

The Phrase I evaluations of the publications from this Department reflected a consistently high standard of quality, with 1 publication receiving a rating of “1” (world-leading), 6 publications receiving a rating of “2” (internationally excellent), 2 publications receiving a rating of “3” (recognized internationally), and no publications receiving ratings of “4” (recognized nationally), or “5” (below standard, or not meeting the definition of published research).

The team plans to continue its research in the current direction and to start new research in the areas of vision science, psycholinguistics and historical instruments (perception of visual space portrayed on photographs, cognitive cartography and syntactic priming and grammatical representations).

2. Strengths and Opportunities

See the general report of the Institute

Progress in scientific output

Interesting topics

3. Weaknesses and Threats

See the general report of the Institute

Administration

Uncertainty of funding

4. Recommendations

With more support for travel, members of this Department could be more active in attending and presenting their work in international conferences across Europe and North America, which would help to enhance the Department's international impact.

5. Detailed evaluations

Involvement of Students in Research

During the period of review (2010-2014), members of the Department of Cognitive Psychology supervised 6 bachelor students, 3 masters students, and 1 doctoral student (1 thesis defended).

Societal Relevance

The basic focus on this Department is on basic research in visual perception, visual attention, and psycholinguistics. The work has implications for questions such as how people read maps (and how maps can be improved for better usability), consequences of and strategies to alleviate visual handicaps, including the effects of macular degeneration. The development of norms for imageability can improve the assessment of child development and mental handicaps. Other work addresses the relationship between the development of linguistic skills and the ability to function in the social world. The study of historical experimental methods provides insight into an interesting facet of the history of psychology.

The team organizes regularly a Winter School of Cognitive Psychology as a service to public.

Members of the Department lecture at four universities.

Outreach activities have included public lectures, high school lectures, and television and radio appearances.

International and National Position

Members of the Department serve on one editorial board, and have reviewed for a few national and international journals. Internationally, cognitive psychology is a very large field that addresses a vast range of topics. The very small size of this Department limits its ability to impact the discipline on an international level.

Recommendations

The very small size of this Department limits its impact. Perhaps greater efforts could be made to set up research collaborations with researchers in other institutions elsewhere in the Czech Republic and in Europe. Members of the Department could also become more active in presenting their work and making contacts at international conferences.

Evaluation of the Team No. 3: Department of research methodology

1. Introduction

This department of the IP is specialized in quantitative and qualitative methodology of psychological research. There are 11 research employees (7 scientists, 4 PhD students). The age structure ranges from 25 to over 55 years. The gender structure is fairly well-balanced.

There are four main research topics: (1) Development of quantitative methods, (2) Development of qualitative methods, (3) Integration of qualitative and quantitative methods and (4) Narrative psychology methods and psychosemantics. The team leader presented the main research results accomplished in each of the domains and at the same time informed about the content of the main publications. In the field of quantitative methodology, among the main outputs he mentioned were two books (*Psychometrics* and *Testing in Psychology*), a project sponsored by NSF (CATO), and a research published in Neurological Sciences. In the field of qualitative methodology, among the main outputs were two books (*Tematicko-apercepční test: interpretační perspektivy*, and *Conception of meaning*), four chapters in two different scientific monographs, and some articles published in scientific journals (*Qualitative Inquiry*, *Personal Construct Theory & Practice*, *NeuroImage*). The department obtained two grants in the evaluated period. One member of the team has obtained the prestigious Otto Wichterle Award.

The Phase I evaluations of the publications from this Department reflected a consistently high standard of quality, with 2 publications receiving a rating of “1” (world-leading), 3 publications receiving a rating of “2” (internationally excellent), 8 publications receiving a rating of “3” (recognized internationally), 1 publication receiving a rating of “4” (recognized nationally), and only no publications receiving ratings of “5” (below standard, or not meeting the definition of published research).

The team plans to continue its research in the current direction. Besides, it obtained a new grant from CSF for new period 2015-2017 (Psychological aspects of video game playing: three generational study). Among the future prospects of the team are Qualitative and mixed-method research into workplace bullying, complex trauma research, and the study of oral history of Czechoslovak psychology based on interviews with the doyens of the discipline.

2. Strengths and Opportunities

See also the general report of the Institute

Progress in scientific output

Interesting topics

Well structured team

3. Weaknesses and Threats

See also the general report of the Institute

Administration

Uncertainty of funding

Too intense pedagogical activities

4. Recommendations

With more support for travel, members of this Department could be more active in attending and presenting their work in international conferences across Europe and North America, which would help to enhance the Department's international impact.

5. Detailed evaluations

Involvement of Students in Research

Students from several universities have been brought into involvement in research in the Institute. During the period 2010-2014, researchers at the Institute supervised 7 bachelor, 80 master and 8 doctoral students; 8 theses were defended.

Societal Relevance

The basic topic of this Department is fundamentally important for society, because it focuses on the measurement of abilities and outcomes that are critical for the success of educational and economic institutions. Such measurements raise many difficult technical issues that are critical for interpreting them and implementing their findings in educational contexts. The basic work of the Department is to improve the scientific basis of such measurements and also to help to explain what they do and do not mean to consumers of this information. The two books on psychological measurement issues written by members of this Department, published in Czech, are an important service to the community of practitioners who conduct psychological measurements, such as tests of ability, and psychological diagnosis. The service is especially important because such books were not previously available in the Czech language. Thus, the implications of the study of psychological methods, as conducted by this Department, range far beyond the field of psychology.

Other topics of clear societal relevance, addressed by this Department, including the study of bullying in the workplace, and the effects of playing video games. The Department is also working on an oral history of Czech psychology, which can help to put the current position of the discipline into a long-term context.

Members of the Department are active as lectures in several universities.

The Department has conducted outreach including a television appearance, a public round-table discussion on the topic of psychological testing, and a work group on psychodiagnostic methods.

International and National Position

Members of the Department publish in internationally respected journals, review for such journals, and have served as members of scientific committees of international conferences. The development of the technology of psychological measurement is a significant topic for psychology world-wide, and the Department contributes to the development of this topic. A particularly significant contribution is its work to integrate qualitative and quantitative research. Historically, qualitative measurement has been viewed as important because it captures elements that are missed by purely quantitative methods, but its analysis has also been questioned because of its seeming subjectivity. More recently, rapid developments in computer and information technology have made the objective, even automated analysis of qualitative data possible, and a currently very active and important issue concerns how to do such automated analysis in an appropriate manner, and how to analyse these assessments quantitatively in a meaningful and useful manner. This topic is precisely the focus of the Department, which positions it well to make internationally significant contributions in the near future.

Date: January 4, 2016

Commission Chair: doc. JUDr., PhD., LL.M. Kristian Csach