

WHAT IS A HYPOTHESIS?

Ordinarily, when one talks about hypothesis, one simply means a mere assumption or some supposition to be proved or disproved. But for a researcher hypothesis is a formal question that he intends to resolve. Thus a hypothesis may be defined as a proposition or a set of proposition set forth as an explanation for the occurrence of some specified group of phenomena either asserted merely as a provisional conjecture to guide some investigation or accepted as highly probable in the light of established facts.

Characteristics of hypothesis:

- (i) Hypothesis should be clear and precise. If the hypothesis is not clear and precise, the inferences drawn on its basis cannot be taken as reliable.
- (ii) Hypothesis should be capable of being tested. In a swamp of untestable hypotheses, many a time the research programmes have bogged down. Some prior study may be done by researcher in order to make hypothesis a testable one. A hypothesis "is testable if other deductions can be made from it which, in turn, can be confirmed or disproved by observation." ¹
- (iii) Hypothesis should state relationship between variables, if it happens to be a relational hypothesis.
- (iv) Hypothesis should be limited in scope and must be specific. A researcher must remember that narrower hypotheses are generally more testable and he should develop such hypotheses.
- (v) Hypothesis should be stated as far as possible in most simple terms so that the same is easily understandable by all concerned. But one must remember that simplicity of hypothesis has nothing to do with its significance.
- (vi) Hypothesis should be consistent with most known facts i.e., it must be consistent with a substantial body of established facts. In other words, it should be one which judges accept as being the most likely.
- (vii) Hypothesis should be amenable to testing within a reasonable time. One should not use even an excellent hypothesis, if the same

cannot be tested in reasonable time for one cannot spend a life-time collecting data to test it.

(viii) Hypothesis must explain the facts that gave rise to the need for explanation. This means that by using the hypothesis plus other known and accepted generalizations, one should be able to deduce the original problem condition. Thus hypothesis must actually explain what it claims to explain; it should have empirical reference.

FLOW DIAGRAM FOR HYPOTHESIS TESTING

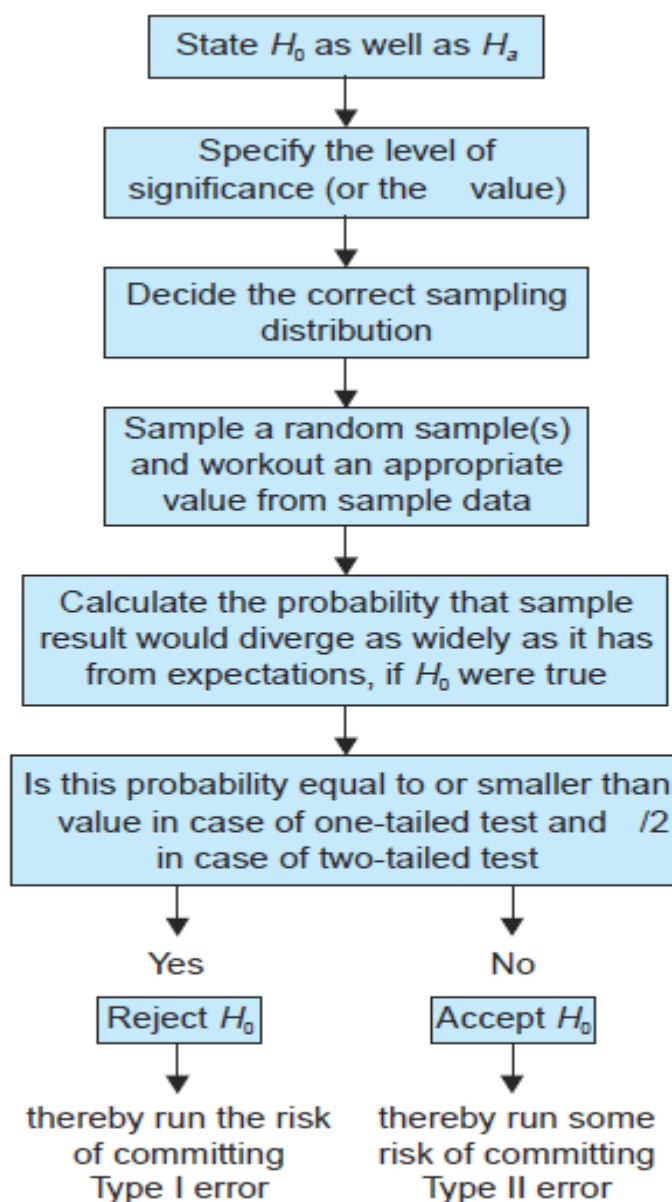


Fig. 9.4