

Research Methods in Psychology

- *Research* is vitally important to the science of Psychology. Theories are built on findings of research studies over the years. The knowledge is gathered and advanced through research!

- Experiments are conducted within psychology daily and they are used for a great variety of research questions (which are formed into 'hypotheses'). The aim of the experiment is to examine the relationship between two or more variables.

- *The advantages* of experiments:

1. The researcher is in control of the situation that is used for this method.
2. The researcher can identify the cause and effect within the experiment.
3. When the experiment is completed the researcher can quickly draw the conclusions.

- *The disadvantages of the experiments:*

1. When an experiment is set up, the situation can be seen as 'artificial', so the results may be not that applicable to the 'real world'.
2. Sometimes the participants subconsciously would try 'to help' the researchers (with their responses) so the results may not be as accurate as they would be in more 'natural' settings.
3. Sometimes experiments maybe not be possible at all or ethical!

- *Correlational study method* examines the relationship between two variables that correlate with each other. An increase in one variable associated with an increase in another variable, this would be called *positive correlation*. An increase in one variable associated with decrease in another variable would be called *negative correlation*.

- Correlation *cannot explain the causation* between variables. If one variable is correlated with another, this doesn't mean that 'one is causing the other'. Also, we cannot make any assumptions beyond the received data.

- *Naturalistic observation*, where the researcher allow the situation unfold in a natural environment. Nothing or very little can be controlled in that situation, and the results are simply based on the researcher's observations (which can be biased).

- *Case study method* is used to analyse a person, a group or a phenomenon in-depth. It is not just a single research method, but an in-depth investigation which employs a variety of research tools, sources and methods.

Recommended Reading:

Nestor, P.G. & Schutt, R.K. (2014). *Research Methods in Psychology: Investigating Human Behaviour*. 2nd ed.

Howitt, D. & Cramer, D. (2007). *Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology*.

Recommended websites:

'Top 10 Online Psychology Experiments'. PsychCentral. Available from: <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2008/08/18/top-ten-online-psychology-experiments/>

'7 Advantages and Disadvantages of Experimental Research'. Flow Psychology. Available from: <http://flowpsychology.com/7-advantages-and-disadvantages-of-experimental-research/>