NON-EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH DESIGNS
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VALIDITY

INTERNAL
VALIDITY
Degree to
which a
research
design allows
us to make
causal
statements

EXTERNAL
VALIDITY
Applicability to
situations
outside the
research
setting

VALIDITY
Studying the
variables that
are intended
to be
measured

DESCRIPTION RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree of imposition of units</th>
<th>Degree of manipulation of antecedent conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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DEFINITION
Nonexperimental research
- Systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables
- The lack of control is what makes it different from experimental research

PHENOMENOLOGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description of an individual’s immediate experience</td>
<td>One’s experience may not be the same as that of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No need to compare behaviors under different treatment conditions</td>
<td>Cannot be replicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can describe a person’s behavior</td>
<td>Lacks accuracy and objectivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cannot explain causes of behavior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CASE STUDIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive record of an individual’s experiences or behaviors kept by an outside observer</td>
<td>May not be representative of the population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Particularly useful in the field of clinical psychology</td>
<td>May not cover all relevant aspects of a person’s life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May neglect to mention important information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retrospective data – data based on recollections of past events; may be prone to inaccuracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIELD STUDIES

**Pros**
- Nonexperimental approaches used in the field

**Cons**
- Cannot determine cause and effect
- Samples may not show the behaviors we want to observe
- Needs to be unobtrusive to reduce reactivity

**1. Naturalistic observation studies**
- Observe events in natural settings
- No need for manipulation of variables

**2. Participant-observer studies**
- Researcher interacts with subjects to obtain information
- Mere presence of an observer can already alter subjects’ behaviors
- May be hard to remain objective

ARCHIVAL STUDY

**Pros**
- Existing records are reexamined for a new purpose
- Cost-effective because it does not need any subjects/participants to study

**Cons**
- Causal inferences cannot be supported

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH (Big-Q)

**Pros**
- Focuses on self-reports, personal narratives, and expression of ideas, memories, feelings and thoughts
- Studies contextual phenomena
- **Empirical phenomenology** – relies on researcher’s own experiences, experiential data from participants, or other sources

**Cons**
- Greater risks for mistakes, biases, and erroneous conclusions than experimental research

ACTIVITY

• Why do nonexperimental studies have higher external validity than true experiments?

• Why do nonexperimental studies have lower internal validity than true experiments?

ASSIGNMENT

• Go to the ProQuest website and look for ONE psychology research study that uses any of the nonexperimental methods discussed today. Print the abstract of the article on a short bondpaper.

• Discuss briefly if the method selected was appropriate for the given study. (3-5 sentences only.) Write your answers below the printed abstract.

• **USERNAME:** cenu0702, **PASSWORD:** proquest07

**ACTIVITY**

For each of the research topics listed here, indicate the type of nonexperimental approach that would be most useful and explain why.

a. Pushing ahead in line
b. Daydreaming
c. Locating the most popular painting in an art gallery
d. Studiousness in college students
e. Determining whether a particular patient has improved with psychotherapy
NEXT MEETING...

- Read Chapter 4: Surveys and Interviews
  A) Survey Research
  B) Constructing Surveys
  C) Measuring Responses
  D) Important Considerations
  E) Collecting Survey Data
  F) Evaluating Surveys and Survey Data