

| Description of Methodology (AO1) | Strengths of Methodology (AO3) | Weaknesses of Methodology (AO3) |
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| <p>LABORATORY EXPERIMENT: conducted under controlled, artificial conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher manipulates the independent variable (IV) whilst measuring the dependent variable (DV). • Conducted under both experimental and a control conditions. • Researcher randomly allocates participants to experimental or control conditions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of control; can infer that the IV caused the DV. • Easy to replicate so that reliability can be checked. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problems of demand characteristics. • Low ecological validity. |
| <p>FIELD EXPERIMENT: conducted in a natural environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IV is still manipulated by the researcher and the DV is still measured. • Participants are unaware that they are being researched. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High in ecological validity. • Fewer demand characteristics. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unethical: participants are unaware of the research. • Extraneous variables affect results. |
| <p>QUASI EXPERIMENTS/NATURAL EXPERIMENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quasi-experiment is not a 'true' experiment because the researcher has not deliberately manipulated an IV, and participants are not randomly allocated to an experimental or a control condition. • A natural experiment is when a research does not deliberately manipulate an IV, they take advantage of a 'naturally occurring' IV. The DV of a natural experiment may be tested in a laboratory, in the field or online. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows research where the IV can't be manipulated for practical or ethical reasons; a range of behaviours can be investigated. • Allows researchers to investigate 'real' problems, such as the effects of a disaster on health, which can help more people in more situations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot demonstrate causal relationships because the IV isn't manipulated directly so we cannot be sure that the IV caused the DV. • Threat to internal validity due to there being less control of extraneous variables that could be the reason for the DV rather than the IV. |
| <p>PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The researcher takes part in the research, joining in with those being observed. • The researcher becomes part of the group and does not reveal who they are. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less chance of demand characteristics. • Enables research of people who would otherwise be very difficult to observe. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observer bias may occur. • Unreliable findings because it is difficult to take notes during the observation; data relies on memory. |
| <p>NON-PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The observer doesn't take part in the action, but instead watches and makes notes from a distance. • The participants are not aware that they are being observed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less chance of observer bias. • Researchers can see how participants behave rather than relying on self-reports; may produce more valid and reliable findings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observer bias: it is difficult to make judgments on thoughts and feelings of participants when they are being watched. • Unethical because participants do not always know they are being observed. |

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| <p>CONTENT ANALYSIS: a type of observational study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written or verbal material such as magazines, television programmes, websites, advertisements etc. are analysed. The sample is the artefact(s) being analysed. The researcher has to create a coding system, which breaks down the information into categories and a tally is taken each time the material fits a theme. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The artefacts being analysed already exist, so less chance of demand characteristics. Can be replicated by others as long as the artefacts are available to other people. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observer bias can affect validity of findings; different observers might interpret the meanings of the categories in the coding system differently. Cannot draw cause and effect relationships because the origin of the artefacts is usually unknown. |
| <p>STRUCTURED INTERVIEW: the interviewer has a pre-prepared set of questions that are asked in a fixed order.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-determined questions are used to elicit a verbal response. Similar to a questionnaire that is answered by participants either face-to-face or over the telephone with the interviewer, there is no deviation from the original questions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The same questions are used every time which makes results easy to analyse. Replicable, so more reliable because the same questions can be asked in the same way. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be restrictive because there is no chance to ask further questions. Doesn't allow for 'spontaneous questions', which may mean the interviewer is less responsive to the participant. |
| <p>QUESTIONNAIRE: a set of written questions where answers are analysed by the researcher.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questionnaires can produce <i>quantitative</i> or <i>qualitative</i> data or a mixture of both. Traditionally they have been paper/pen based, but more recently psychologists are using on-line options. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be used to assess psychological variables that may not be obvious by just observing someone. Data can be collected from a large group of participants more quickly than interviewing them. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no guarantee that the participant is telling the truth. Different participants may interpret the same question in different ways. |
| <p>SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW: begins with a general aim and a few pre-determined questions but subsequent questions develop based on the answers given by the participant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sometimes called a clinical interview because it is a bit like the kind of interview you might have with a doctor. They start with some predetermined questions, but further questions are developed as a response to your answers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More qualitative information can be gathered by the interviewer because they tailor the questions to the respondent's responses. High validity because participants have the opportunity to fully express their true feelings/views. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The same questions are not used every time; results are difficult to analyse, and it is difficult to identify patterns and trends. Not replicable due to different questions asked each time and therefore unreliable. |