

Revision Notes

Chapter 2: Methods of Inquiry in Psychology

- A psychological research is conducted for the purpose of description, prediction, explanation, control of behaviour, and application of knowledge generated in an objective manner. It involves the following four steps: conceptualising a problem, collection of data, analysing data, drawing and revising research conclusions. The psychological research is also conducted to discover and understand the subjective meanings of events as they occur in a particular context, and also reflect upon one's own behaviour and experiences.
- In psychological studies, different types of data including demographic, environmental, physical, physiological, and psychological information are collected. However, the data in psychological studies remain located in a context and are tied to the theory and method used for its collection.
- Different methods are used for collecting information. The observation method is used for describing the behaviour. It is characterised by selection of a particular behaviour, its recording and analysis. Observation can be done in a naturalistic or controlled laboratory conditions. It can take the form of a participant or non-participant observation.
- The experimental method helps in establishing cause-effect relationship. The effect of the presence of independent variable on the dependent variable is studied using experimental and control groups.
- The purpose of correlational research is investigating association between variables as well as making predictions. The relationship between two variables can be positive, zero or negative, and strength of association varies from +1.0 through 0.0 to – 1.0.
- The focus of survey research is to inform about the existing reality. Surveys can be conducted by using structured and unstructured interviews, mailed questionnaires, and telephone.
- The psychological tests are standardised and objective instruments which help in knowing one's standing in comparison to others. Tests can be verbal, non-verbal, and

performance types, which can be administered individually or to the entire group at a time.

- The method of case study gives detailed in-depth information about a particular case.
- The data collected through the use of these methods are analysed through quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative methods allow the use of statistical procedure for drawing conclusions. Narrative method and method of content analysis are some methods that are used in case of qualitative research.
- Lack of absolute zero point, relative nature of psychological tools, and subjective interpretation of qualitative data are some of the limitations of psychological enquiry. Ethical principles of voluntary participation of the subjects, their informed consent, and sharing of results with the participants must be followed by a researcher.